2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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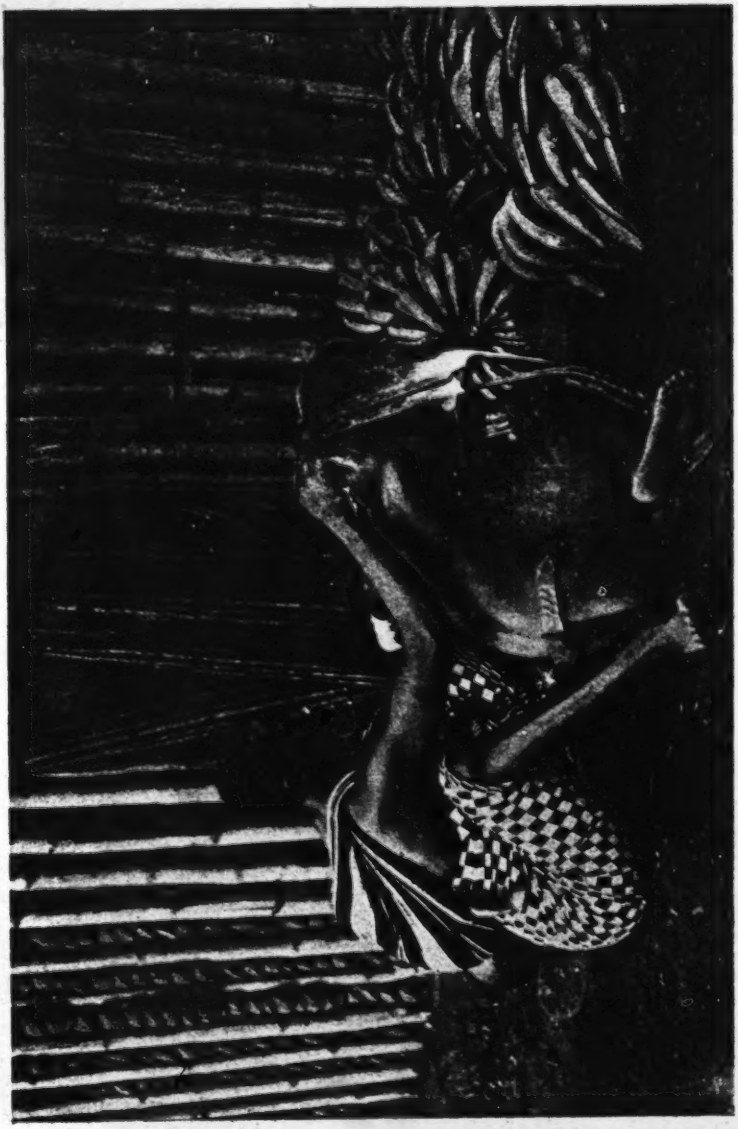


5. *Shaving the bride*

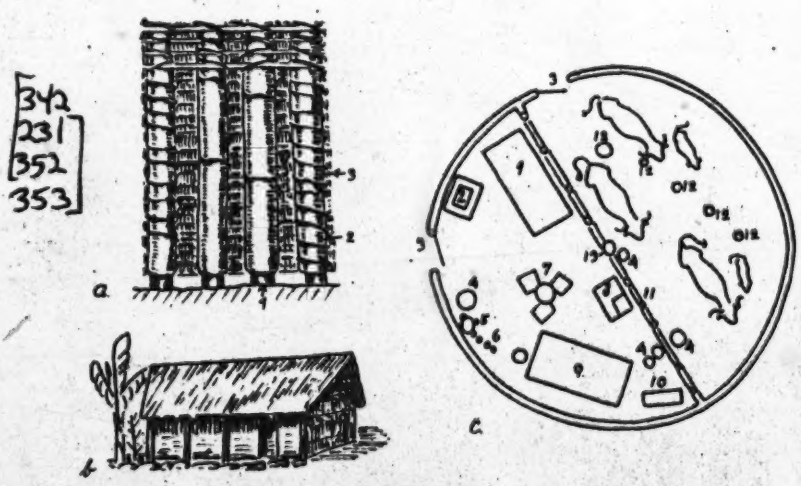
[facing p 100]

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17 Nyakyusa

parts. The partition wall was bamboo and mud. A doorway gave on to the inner part, where Tufwene had her bed.

There were two hearths, one in each room. The front one was not used. In the outer room was a bed for guests—a common feature of all houses. Tufwene was thought to be well off, and she had plenty of carrying rings, used by the women when they carry loads, often very heavy, on their heads. The inner room was used for stores, including a number of earthen jars. She had three very fine, low stools. I saw them outside in the sun, but their usual place was no doubt in the outer room, which had the character of a workroom. Here were the large wooden mortar and its long pestle; also the grinding stone and in a corner the small mat, the *ulupanya*, which is used to take up the newly ground flour. There was also the ladder, used for fetching down firewood from the loft; you could see the hen's nest, and the large water jar with its pointed bottom placed on three stones.

The third *isienga* belonged to an eighty-year-old woman whose husband had died. She told me how every day she would fill a fine, decorated bamboo mug with milk for him! These mugs, seen in all the houses, mostly have geometrical



Houses belonging to Malia Ulinyelusya and her husband.

a. Detail of *isienga*, outer wall. 1, tree fern stem joined to bamboo pole—note aperture for liquid manure; 2, bamboo pole with plant fibre windings; 3, split bamboo.—b, Malia's *itibaga*. —c. Plan of *isienga*. 1, bed of the man; 2, iron chests for garments; 3, door; 4, posts supporting ceiling; 5, hen's nest; 6, hoes and pestle for the maize mortar; 7, hearth; 8, chests; 9, bed of the grandchildren; 10, roost from hollowed out trunk; 11, low partition; 12, posts for tying cattle; 13, centre post to top of roof.

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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patterns burned into the bamboo; they are hung upside down so the dust will not settle in them. The bottom is the natural partition of the bamboo cane.

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The house was standing on high, slightly slanting ground, and like the first mentioned house it was buttressed by a great number of thick branches. Incidentally, it seemed to be very old and rickety. Inside, there were a great many posts supporting the horizontal bamboo ceiling and the stores of firewood. All posts were bifurcated and held the beams solidly in place. The diameter of the house was the usual 6.5 metres, but in this case there was no inner partition. As this woman was very poor, she had no bed, but slept on a mat on the floor. Only very rarely is there no bed in the houses; I remember having seen this only three times.

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The hearth was the usual type: three decorated square stones, rising to a height of 30 cm above the floor, but being sunk 70 cm into the ground. Here they were positioned on one side, to ensure that the centre post would not catch fire, and to make for easy escape of the smoke through the doorway. None of the houses have other means of smoke outlet.

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Alongside the wall were calabashes, jars, and baskets; material for the baskets; and a little away from the wall, the large mill-stone and its appurtenant smaller grinding stone. A hen's nest was not missing either. Along one side was fitted a small under-ceiling for the storage of small things. Two or three bananas, meant to be her next meal, were lying on the floor near one of the posts. From the loft she reached down a calfskin in which she had been carrying her child. Its inside was of a reddish colour.

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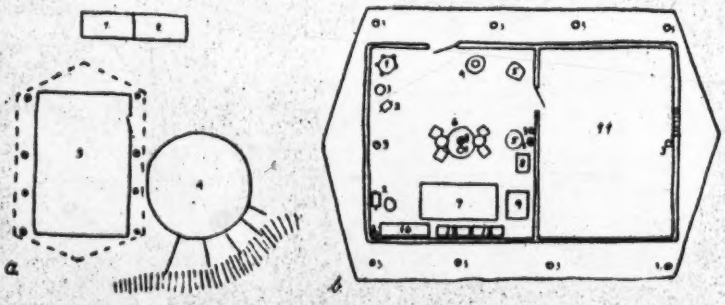

a. Site plan of Malia Ulinyelusya's houses. 1, hen-coop; 2, drying-racks for crops; 3, Malia's *ikibaga* with roof supports along sides; 4, *isinga* belonging to Malia's husband, with buttresses at low ground.—b. Plan of Malia's *ikibaga* (barred window in back room). 1, hen's nest; 2, *ikitete* (stool); 3, posts (those going up to ridge of roof are filled in); 4, large basket; 5, basket; 6, clay base round twin posts; 7, Malia's bed; 8, chest; 9, wooden chest; 10, table; 11, back room, having bamboo ceiling carried by bamboo cross beam (between posts marked 3); the room is used for storing clothes, etc.; 12, shelves.

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

but I was astonished that this trap was erected relatively near to my tent on the border of the village of Katumba.

6. Fishing. Fishing is a much more common practice with the Nyakyusa than hunting. The old-established custom of poisoning fish in their smaller rivers is still widely used. The poison is derived from the *unkeredu* shrup. Its branches and leaves are broken off, reduced to small pieces between stones and then packed in a covering of grass to resemble a long cigar about 1 meter in length and 25 cm in width. The bundles prepared in such a manner are fixed between two rowes of stones placed across the river for this purpose. The poison gradually diffuses into the water, which takes on a green colour. The fish are soon affected by the poison and rise to the surface with gaping mouths. They are then easily caught with a scoop made from bamboo. The open end of a piece of bamboo is split into several sections and the splinters are bent apart and tied together with raffia to form a sort of funnel[1]. The fish are strung through their gills on small pliable sticks and roasted at home over a fire. All people are allowed to join in this fishing which to them is always a festive occasion in the cooler season.

Fishing in broader and deeper rivers, such as the lower Kiwira, is done by means of large fish-traps. They are made and repaired by men on the banks of the river. The traps are attached to poles rammed into the bed and almost invariably boats trying to reach the Lake Nyassa get struck on submerged poles. These large fish-traps strung across the river form quite an impressive sight. Looking up-stream, they look like the bows of little ships standing in a row.

7. Preparing food. With the Nyakusa the preparation of food is so exclusively the task of the women, that R. Thurnwald ist quite correct when says (Black and White in East Africa, London 1935, p. 157): "Menfolk starve if there are no women to prepare their meals". There is thus a very strong division of labour between the sexes, also noticable in the carrying of loads. For a young man to carry the load of an old woman or his sweetheart, whom perchance he might meet on the road, would be a grave violation of a rigid custom.

As the preparation of the food is the women's duty, also the grinding *(ukutika)* of the corn in a mortar *(ikituli)* with a pestle *(ikitiro)* which is the exclusive task of the female sex. The wife is always the first to rise in the morning to prepare breakfast. Usually, however, this is not

[1] NB. They are of the same kind as those of the Hottentots along the Great Fish River in South West Africa.

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

291 301 belts are also worn by men, nowadays below the other clothing. More and more pieces of cotton with imprinted patterns have come into 291 vogue. They are worn around the lower part of the body or below the 177 shoulders or fastened about one of them, and are bought from Indian [439] shops. That this modern fashion, however, is something new in such places which are a little remoter from direct European influence was demonstrated to me when I came through a small village in the environment of Masoko. There by chance I met some young girls carrying a piece of cloth on the top of a long pole as if it were a banner. On enquiry I was told that this "banner" was nothing other than a [556 piece of cloth newly bought by a woman of that village and that it was 482] hoisted on a pole and carried in procession out of sheer joy that this woman had been able to buy it.

291 Menfolk throughout are fuller dressed, especially when they go dancing. The women, on the other hand, wear their ordinary dress also on such occasions. The dancing costume of the men — only the younger [292 men participate in dancing — consists of a sort of tight-jacket or 535] sweater and wide robes with coloured patterns. The hair is adorned [302 with feathers. At work the men mostly wear only loin cloths or shorts. 237] After work especially the older man wrap their bodies in blankets. It is very seldom nowadays to find even very old men still wearing the former national dress: a bundle of long grass in front and a smaller one behind tied to the waist by means of a string, as I found a man on a solitary spot near Rungwe Station. Little boys go altogether naked untill they are about three years of age. Little girls begin to wear a small *amabi* at an earlier age.

531 *13. Art.* One of the most interesting and striking features in the artistic endowment of the Nyakyusa are the decorations on the outer-walls of their huts. The latter are only painted, however, when the exterior of the framework of bamboo is mud covered, otherwise only the wooden doors *(ikifigo,* door) of the huts are painted. By no means every hut or house is painted, but only a limited number in each village, probably depending on the presence and industry of an artist as this art is as in other cases an individualistic one. One such artist was introduced to me in a village near Rutenganio. The ornaments consist in most cases of geometrical patterns in white and black, seldom in other colours, or they represent different sorts of animals, e. g. elephants, horses, cattle, snakes, etc. The richest designs I found in a long extended village on the right bank of the upper Kiwira. In an other case the names of the animals were written in Swahili below